







A few weeks after the events recorded in the last chapter, and when Sally went to visit her mammy on Saturday evening, she was surprised to find her in tears.

"Dear mammy," cried the child, clinging her arm affectionately round her neck, "what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, child—nothing, baby," said the woman, as she tenderly folded her foster-child to her bosom. "Nothing that need make your pretty eyes red with crying; and again the woman's tears fell fast and blinding.

"Tell me, dear mammy, what is the matter?" Mammy made no reply, but swayed her body back and forth in agony of grief, while the child still clung to her, praying to know the cause.

Just then, Amy, Mrs. Manners's cook, came in, with an uneasy step. She walked up to Aunt Betty, saying, in a tone of voice that faltered with a respectful sympathy:

"Miss Sally, you had better go home; I don't stay here to 'dress yourself' bout what has happened—you ain't to blame. But, oh! she exclaimed passionately, "that's a black account somethin'! I 'em that God joins together, worse than the devil puts asunder. Oh, that's a great day of reckoning a come for de white folks. And I wouldn't stand in thar shoes for a pretty price;" and she wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron.

"What's been done now?" asked Sally.

"Why, to be sure, Miss Sally, they's done sold Uncle Bill," replied Amy.

"Oh! my God! oh, my God! I won't be come now," cried Aunt Betty. "My heart's done broke right in two. Oh, Lord, have mercy!"

"Who sold Uncle Bill? Who sold mammy's good husband?" exclaimed Sally, while her grey eyes seemed starting from their lids, and her cheeks were pale as death.

"Why, his master, Mr. Hooks," answered Amy. "Who bought him?"

"A nigger-trader."

"And he goes down the river to-morrow," cried the agonized wife, "and I'll never see him any more. Oh, my poor old man, my poor old man; they'll work him to death on their rice plantations. Oh, I'll never see him any more. Oh, God, kill me! kill me right here, on the spot! I haint nothing to live for. They sold all my children, one by one, and I thought they would leave my husband. Now he's got to go!"

Sally stood, with whitened cheek and shortening breath, her ear drinking in this wild lamentation. They were words of sorrow from a heart that had ever been alive to Sally's slightest pang. The child stood like one transfixed, when, suddenly loosening her hold of mammy, she walked firmly out of the cabin.

It was just sunset. The golden rays played lovingly over the brown crags of the child as she hastened along the pathway to her grandfather's house, about half-mile from the cabin. She walked with a stately step, for a great purpose was in her heart. She passed several gentlemen, whom she knew well, and who greeted her with the tenderest salutation. They had been friends of her father. But she did not see them. One of them, a lawyer of the village, looking after her, said to his companion:

"That is a strange child. They say she can be brought under no kind of rule. She is not lacking in wit, is of a keen and ready tongue, but difficult to educate. I knew and loved her father, and the little Frolic has a charm for me."

"I don't know what to do with her," said her master. "She is a sort of savage, a charming, wild creature, but she can't be brought up as an honest child. She is so unlike him in all her ways. She is always revolting, *wildly*. My children speak of her as self-willed and impudent."

"Yes, the little imp has lived with her nurse, and been accustomed to do as she pleased. She does brook restraint, is proud and arrogant; but I love my mettled animal. The child is strange, and for that I like her; her directness of speech amuses me. She is a true 'dog as would be done by.' Her family tell funny stories of her remarkable sense of justice. Did you notice how proudly she passed us, seeming not to hear our salutation?"

"Yes; and her father was the proudest man that ever stepped. I verily believe he secured the sold earth upon which he trod. But then he was a fine fellow—good with a glass of wine, excellent at cards, and the best shot in the country. Oh! he was a capital blood. Ah! Livingston, when I think of our young gay days, I can't believe myself the sober father of a growing family."

"Yes; but, Dixon, we are all stepping along quite fast in the old worn path."

The two friends passed on, forgetful of their momentary interest in the daughter of their old friend, in recalling the memories of their younger days. She, meanwhile, hastened forward to the house of her grandfather. Determination was written all over her face and form. She planted her foot upon the ground as if resolved to make the dumb earth cry out at their touch and speak with her in a cause so dear. She did not doubt her success, and was only in a hurry to get back to her mammy and tell the result of her visit. When she neared the house, the moon was just kissing the roof, and trembling upon the vines and blossoms that clustered on the porch, and filled the atmosphere with delicious perfume.

It was a lovely evening, one to calm the heart and soothe the spirit. Sally passed through the piazza and front hall into the library, where her grandfather sat at the open window, looking out upon the sweet moonlit scene.

That was a beautifully-furnished room, with shelves of books, busts, vases and pictures, easy-chairs, lounges and soft-cushioned carpet: all the appliances of luxuriant comfort.

Sally crept up to her grandfather's side, and, kneeling beside him, said:

"Grandfather, did you know that Mr. Hooks had sold Uncle Bill to a nigger-trader?"

"No, my child. But what brought you here at this hour of the evening? Who came with you? Does your mammy know where you are?"

"Grandfather, I came here to ask you to do something for Uncle Bill. Can't you buy him?"

"No, indeed, my child; I've more darkness now than I can afford to keep."

"Are you going to let Uncle Bill be sent down the river?"

"If his master has sold him, he will have to go."

"Grandfather, it will kill mammy."

"Not a bit of it, child. She'll cry a little for a while, but then get over it."

"I can't bear to see him go. He has been kind to me, grandfather. When I lived with mammy, he used to bring me apples and maple sugar of Saturday evenings, and take me riding in his little sled. It was good to me—good to everybody—and he loves mammy and won't want to leave her."

"Bill has been a bad negro, Sally. He is a rogue, and I dare say Mr. Hooks sold him for some bad conduct."

"I don't believe it. And if he did, I don't want him sold. I say do something for him, dear grandfather; and the child coaxingly put her arms round his neck and kissed his gray locks, whilst the moisture from her eyes dampened his broad forehead."

The old man was touched by the child's emotion. He knew her. "My pretty, forward one, how you take these things to heart! You'll nip all the pretty blossoms of old Betty before she's tampered with you. She has sent you here. She is a sorry negro."

"No, grandfather; she does not know that I have come. She refused to tell me what was the matter, when I found her crying; but it will break my heart to see Uncle Bill sold away to the South. If you can't afford to buy him, won't you send your uncle Manners, or Uncle Jim, and I'll speak to him. I say, 'Why, anybody

might do it, rather than see him sold away from his wife.'"

Mr. Morton smiled.

"My little girl talks just like herself. Now, I dare say Sally would sell all her pretty things, give her nice new hat and frock, and go quite plainly dressed, to buy Uncle Bill."

"Yes, indeed, I would, dear grandfather; you can have them all, all, and I wish I had more. Only hoy poor Bill."

Mr. Morton pressed the child warmly to his heart.

"Oh, I love this good little boy!" he murmured. "She is a sweet little child, let her needs be as whimsical as they may. She seems well. But this little good spirit will be often wounded in life. She trusts and hopes for much?"

Sally paid but little attention to this mattered praise. Her thoughts were fixed upon Uncle Bill's rescue.

Whilst she lay upon her grandfather's bosom, pleading with a child's impassioned eloquence for her foster-mother's husband, a far different scene was being enacted in another part of the house.

Miss Emily and her widowed sister, Mrs. Goodwin, were seated in a handsomely furnished boudoir, plying their white fingers upon some dainty embroidery-work. The room displayed all the luxuries of Eastern life.

Everything bespoke beauty and refinement. The ladies themselves were lovely and elegant as wealth, good birth and early habits could make them. They were fair and low-voiced; trained to courtly rule and agreeable manners; they never jarred the ear by rough tones, or offended delicate taste by brusque manner. They were Southern beauties; and everybody knows that implies grace and loveliness of appearance.

They were talking in that low, rumbling strain, listless and almost redundant of words; and quite a pretty picture it was. Miss Emily's light form was draped in a blue silk that swept the floor like a mass of cloud. Diamonds hung from her fair, fine, and sparkled on her finger tips. Her azure eyes, delicate complexion, and hair like the yellow willows, seemed to bespeak her of the softest and most feminine mood. The tiny foot that had rested, half toyed upon the velvet stool would have been a rare possession for Cinderella herself.

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"Why, to be sure, Miss Sally, they's done sold Uncle Bill," replied Amy.

"Oh! my God! oh, my God! I won't be come now," cried Aunt Betty. "My heart's done broke right in two. Oh, Lord, have mercy!"

"Who sold Uncle Bill? Who sold mammy's good husband?" exclaimed Sally, while her grey eyes seemed starting from their lids, and her cheeks were pale as death.

"Why, his master, Mr. Hooks," answered Amy.

"Who bought him?"

"A nigger-trader."

"And he goes down the river to-morrow," cried the agonized wife, "and I'll never see him any more. Oh, my poor old man, my poor old man; they'll work him to death on their rice plantations. Oh, I'll never see him any more. Oh, God, kill me! kill me right here, on the spot! I haint nothing to live for. They sold all my children, one by one, and I thought they would leave my husband. Now he's got to go!"

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"I don't know what to do with her," said her master.

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